

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 01872 190326Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-12 MCE-00
/076 W

-----071806 190329Z /64

R 181916Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 1872

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MILI, HO, ES, UK
SUBJ: HONDURAN ARMS PURCHASES

1. THE TWO MOST RECENTLY PURCHASED SUPER MYSTERES HAVE NOW
ARRIVED IN HONDURAS. THIS BRINGS TO TEN THE AIR FORCE'S FLEET OF
THIS AIRCRAFT.

2. WIRE SERVICE STORIES FROM LONDON, CONFIRMED BY EMBASSY
SOURCES, REPORT THAT THE GOH HAS CONTRACTED TO BUY BRITISH-MADE
SCORPION LIGHT TANKS. EXACT NUMBERS HAVE NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED.
(FOR LONDON: ANY INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON NUMBERS WOULD BE
APPRECIATED.)

3. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY IS UNAWARE OF ANDVLANS AT THIS TIME
FOR BUYING MORE SUPER MYSTERES. THE HONDURAN ARMY HAS
BEEN INTERESTED IN THE SCORPION FOR SOME TIME NOW. WHILE
THE GOH HAS NOT ANNOUNCED ITS PLANS, IT HAS BEEN CONSIDERING
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THE FORMATION OF AN ARMORED BATTALLION. EMBASSY ESTIMATES THAT
15-20 TANKS WOULD BESREQUIRED FOR THIS. SALVADORAN REACTION TO
THE SCORPION PURCHASE, AS REPORTED TO DATE BY THE PRESS, APPEARS
RELATIVELY MODERATE. NEVERTHELESS, IT ALSO SEEMS LIKELY TO CON-
TRIBUTE TO THE GOES FEELING THAT HONDURAS, WITH ITS SUPERIOR
AIR FORCE, IS CONTINUING TO ARM. WITH TEN INFANTRY BATTALLIONS
AND THREE OF ARTILLERY, AN ARMORED UNIT WOULD BE A LOGICAL NEXT

DEVELOPMENT. THE GOH MAY NOT ONLY BE THINKING OF ITS RELATIONS WITH EL SALVADOR IN DOING THIS. IT VIEWS ITSELF, WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION, AS AN AREA OF RELATIVE TRANQUILITY SURROUNDED BY NEIGHBORS WHO HAVE SERIOUS INTERNAL SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS, WITH ALL THREE OF WHOM HONDURAS HAS HAD AT ONE TVCZ OR ANOTHER BORDER DIFFERENCES AND IN WHOSE PROBLEMS THE GOH WOULD NOT LIKE TO BECOME INVOLVED.
BARTCH

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